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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

DECORATIVE ART.

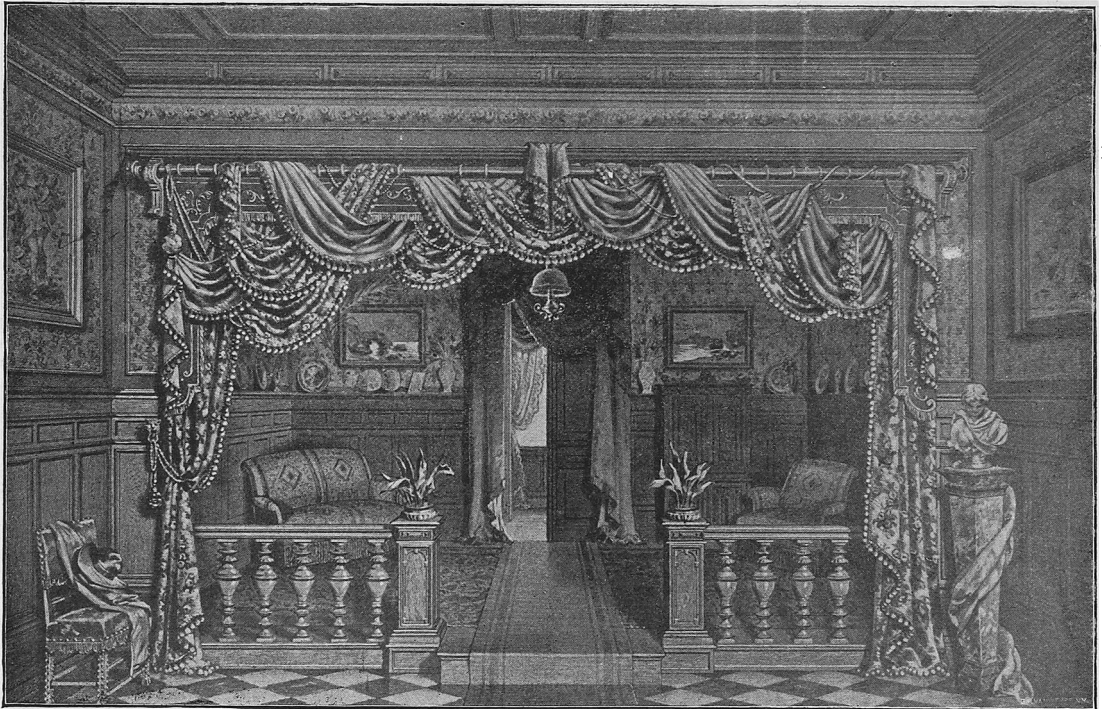
BY FRONA EUNICE WAIT.

EVER since Mrs. Candace Wheeler, of New York, invented what are known as American tapestries, women have been actually engaged in decorative art as a profession. Under their benign influence much has been done to stimulate home productions, and the silk mills and carpet looms have turned out some fine specimens of a native texture. Mrs. Wheeler is no longer in the business herself, but she has left able lieutenants who are carrying out her ideas. Among the textures which will live always are the shadow silks and mail cloths which owe their being to the fertile brain and deft fingers of Mrs. Wheeler. The Sloanes and other large carpet manufacturers have done much for home talent in prizes offered for best designs and the unvarying rule of giving employment to graduates from the different technical and mechanical institutes throughout the country. A high standard of excellence is maintained, and the same bene-

with conventional designs in white, and these are used for wall hangings, and even floor coverings.

For floors there are admirable makes of mattings, which range in price from forty cents upward, and there are pretty selections to be had in ingrain carpets for less than one dollar a yard. Aside from denim hangings there are burlaps from a coarse grain bag quality down to a close imitation of tapestry canvas, fifty inches wide and from twenty-five cents up. These are decorated with bold conventional designs, either done with a brush and tapestry dyes, or else embroidered in outline or darning stitch with cable or rope silk. If tenting is used it is artistically shaded and then outlined with gold thread (Japanese). A pleasing diversion is applique designs of velvet couched down, and it sometimes happens that the embroidery, tinting and applique are all combined in the scroll design of a portiere. The burlaps come in olive, old rose, blue, brown, tan, and shades of gray, and are really beautiful when used properly.

For sofa cushions, table and bureau scarfs there is a new material called Bolton sheeting. It may also be used for bed spreads and portieres. It is a deep cream white, and has a twill-



MODERN STYLE OF ARRANGING DRAPERY, BY A. & L. STREITENFELD.

ficial rule is adopted by wall-paper houses and interior finishers as well.

Decorative art is many-sided, varying from interior architecture proper to sachet bags and tidies. In San Francisco the grading has been done to a fine point, and there are houses there who devote themselves exclusively to some special branch. That there should be sharp competition between the furniture and upholsters argues well for discriminating taste, and there are at least three of the successful firms composed of women.

Dame Fashion, the fickle, has something to say about interior decorations, especially in fabrics, colors and designs, and when it comes to fancy work proper she is an absolute tyrant. Just now it pleases her to utilize the homely things of life. The poor man has his inning at last, and the fashionable are obliged to recognize his claim on art. This they do by hangings of denim and duck, the veritable materials used for the laboring man's overalls. The Associated Artists have given their approval by devising a means of stamping the blue and brown denims

like coarse cotton flannel. It is two yards wide and sells for seventy-five cents. In decorating, ring, ribbon and scroll designs are employed, and these are wrought out in tinting and rope silk outlines, all of which will wash well. Cinderella cloth is alike on both sides and a combination of mohair and wool which is cheap and comes very wide. It is in all colors, and can be used the same as Bolton sheeting.

The coarse towel crash takes the place of canvas of all kinds, and there are some pretty things in Japanese cottons, blue and white, which make effective borders for blue denim hangings.

Something more expensive, but of exquisite design, are the Yama Mai silks, thirty-six inches wide, and of American make. They are glacé and changeable, and but slightly heavier than India silk. They come in dainty colors, and have a groundwork like the old-fashioned dotted muslins. Besides this there are wreath and ribbon designs in monoloin brocade, the effect being produced by the changeable lights and shades. A dream of loveliness was a pale blue and gold, which was to be used for

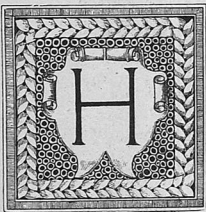
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boudoir hangings in an up-town house. All of the tapestry canvases are in demand, and these are decorated with tapestry dyes skillfully laid on with a brush. Queen Anne stitches are most in use. Anyone who understands Kensington embroidery will have no trouble in picking up the cross stitches characteristic of the Queen Anne work. Instead of outline, skeleton stitch is most in use. To be effective it should be shaded, and this requires considerable taste and skill to execute properly. In embroidery silks rope and cable cord still remain popular. A fine twisted silk, used for Kensington proper is called Royal Art. Couching silk looks very like a fine quality of candlewicks. It is quite as large and as loose in twist, but it has the fine glossy surface of the floss silk.

Filo glass is the finest grade used, and it works into a surface as smooth and shining as the satin upon which it is used. The blending is all done from the background, and filo glass lends itself readily to this branch of art. Shaded silks and glasses are entirely discarded, and a woman who reproduces a bunch of roses or nasturtium from nature has to use more skill with her needle than her sister artist would require for a brush. Monotones and blended backgrounds are seen in all kinds of work, and the designs are a curious blending of very natural flowers with scroll, ribbon and wheel patterns. Coarse textures naturally require bold designs, and these are executed in heavy rope and cable silks, but the moleskin velvets and smooth-faced canvases are ornamented with miniature figures very like the rococo and empire period. With this line of decoration there is bamboo fret-work and art matting. Fret-work in simple design is still used over windows and doors, and the matting and inlaid carpets come in solid colors or small patterns to match the general character of the furnishings. Linen and all kinds of white embroidery and decoration follows the general plan, but the woman of small means and whose time is limited has reason to thank her stars that it is quite the proper caper to use simple things and not to put much work on them either.

TAO: THE WAY.

BY JOHN LA FARGE.



OW should we help a man to assist or to sweeten his acquired position? What vulgarity of vulgarities should we produce? Think of the preposterous dwellings, the vulgar adornments, given to the rich; the second-hand clothing in which newly acquired power is wrapped.

I need not refer to what is seen in San Francisco as an example. At home in New York we have more than are pleasant to think of. I know that some may say that we have only what we deserve for thinking that we can escape, in the laws that govern art, the rules that we have found to hold in everything else.

Some years ago I told you how once a purveyor of decorations for the millionaire, a great man in his line, explained to me how and why he had met his clients half way. "You despise my work," he said, "though you are too polite to say so,"—for we were friendly in a manner,—and yet I can say that I am more thoroughly in the right than those who would seek to give these men an artistic clothing fit for princes. Is there anything more certain than that the artist represents his age, and is all the greater for embodying it? Now, that is what I do. You will say that my work is not deeply considered, though it is extremely careful in execution; that its aims are not high; that it is not sober; that it is showy, perhaps even more; that it is loud, occasionally—when it is not tame; that it shows for all it is worth, and is never better than it looks. And who, pray, are the people that live surrounded by what I make? Are they not represented by what I make? Are they not represented by what I do? Do they not want show of such a kind as can be easily understood, refinement that shall not remind others of a refinement greater than theirs, money spent largely, but showing for every dollar? They want everything quick, because they have always been in a hurry; they want it on time, whatever happens, because they are accustomed to time bargains; they want it advertisable, because they live by advertising; and they grad-

ually believe in the pretences that they made to others. They are not troubled by what they feel in transient, because their experience has been to pass on to others the things that they preferred not to keep. They feel suspicious of anything that claims or seems to be better than it looks; is not their business to sell dearer than they buy? They must not be singular, because they must fit into some place already occupied.

"I claim to have fully expressed all this of them in what I do, and I care little for the envious contempt of architects who have to employ me, and who would like to have my place and wield my influence. And so I reflect my clients, and my art will have given what they are."

Thus the great German rolled out his mind with the Teutonic delight at giving an appearance of pure intellect to the interested working of his will—incidentally sneering at the peacock feathers, the sad-eyed dados, the poverty stricken sentimentality, half æsthetic, half shopkeeper, of his English rivals, or at the blunders in art Sanford White once called our "native Hottentot style."

Of course my German was merely using a current sophistry that is only worth quoting to emphasize the truth.

Augustus, the greatest of all parvenus, did not ask of Virgil to recall in verse the cruelties of civil war. No true artist has ever sought to be degraded; no worker of the Middle Ages has reflected the brutality of the world around him. On the contrary he has appealed to its chivalry and its religion. No treacherous adventurer of the Renaissance is pictured in the sunny refined architecture that was made for him. You and I know that art is not the attempt at reflecting others, at taking possession of others, who belong to themselves, but that it is an attempt at keeping possession of one's self. It is often a protest at what is displeasing and mean about us; it is an appeal to what is better. That is its most real value. It is an appeal to peace in time of brutal war, an appeal to courageous war in time of ignoble peace; it is an appeal to permanent reality in presence of the transient. It is an attempt to rest for a moment in the true way. We are augurs conversing together, and we can afford to laugh at any respected absurdity. We know that cleverness is not *the way* to the reality; cleverness is only man's weak substitute for integrity, which is from God.

Twenty-seven centuries ago the formula of all good work was the same as it has been since. This looking for "the thing itself," not for the formula to control it, enabled men who were great and men who were little, far down towards us, far down into the times of the Renaissance (until pedantry and night covered human freedom and integrity) to be painters or poets, sculptors or architects, as the occasion required, to the astonishment of our narrowed specialized vision of the last two hundred years.—*The Century Magazine.*

WOOD-CARVING has been for some time a favorite occupation with artistic women, and now, by the new process of wood staining, a clever woman can transform an inexpensive basswood table into a beautiful little tea table resembling inlaid wood. Very odd, unique-shaped pieces are sought, or may be ordered from a cabinet-maker. The pattern is traced on the wood with a sharp-pointed pencil and then stained with different materials to different shades. A good brown stain may be made with a few ounces of Vandyke brown, ground to a fine powder and mixed with coffee. Lampblack, diluted, may be used for ebony, and bichromate of potash, ground and dissolved in water, makes a bright brown stain, which can be used only on hard wood. Logwood produces yellow, and dragon's blood powder stains red. After the pattern is well stained in the interstices of the wood and the centre must be stained in a lighter color. Any flat sable brush will answer to apply the stain, which, when finished, must be French polished after the outlines of the pattern have been traced with the finest line of lamplblack.



A Carved Pipe Rack.